



# PORNIFICATION

## *A Study Into Young Men's Attitudes and Beliefs Toward Dating, Sex and Sexual Assault*

**Dr. D. Scharie Tavcer**

Associate Professor

Department of Economics, Justice and Policy Studies

Mount Royal University

stavcer@mtroyal.ca

403-440-6383

Can young men distinguish between quotes from conventional magazines and quotes from convicted rapists? To what extent do young men agree/disagree with statements about dating, sex, women and sexual assault?

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the existing literature about young men's attitudes towards women and sex. This study is a partial replication of the work conducted in the United Kingdom (UK) by Horvath & Hegarty (2011) combined with a partial replication of the work conducted in the United States (USA) by Lonsway & Fitzgerald (1995)

Myths, beliefs and the attitudes of today's young men toward dating, sex, and sexual assault are also explored in this study. Similar research in the UK revealed over 60 percent of male respondents could not differentiate between dating advice in a men's magazine and quotes from a convicted rapist. Tavcer focuses on gauging the attitudes of young male students at Mount Royal University. The study mainly explores the following questions:

**1. Can young men distinguish between quotes from conventional magazines & quotes from convicted rapists?**

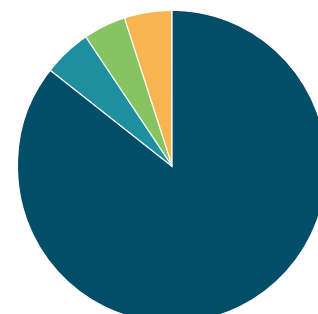
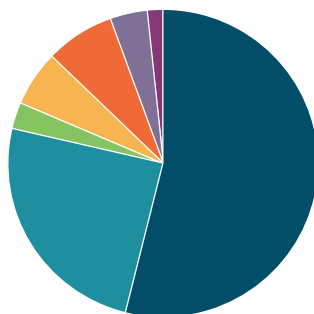
**2. Under what conditions do young men believe sexual assault and/or rape is acceptable?**

**3. Does the pornification of dating advice negatively influence myths about sexual violence?**

**4. Have these beliefs changed since Burt's 1980 assessment of rape myths?**

## Methodology

Participants were asked to distinguish comments made within men's magazines from those made by convicted rapists. Participants were then asked to answer questions about sexual assault and under what conditions do they believe it is "acceptable".



## SAMPLE

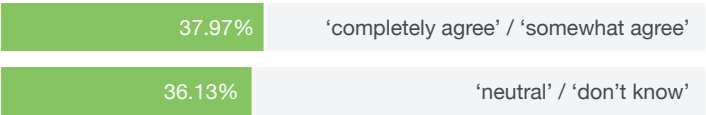
Online survey	1
Number of respondents	182
Years of age	18+
Sex	male
Second and third year students at MRU	

single	56.04%
in a relationship	25.82%
engaged	2.75%
common-law	6.04%
married	7.69%
divorced/separated	3.85%
widowed	1.65%

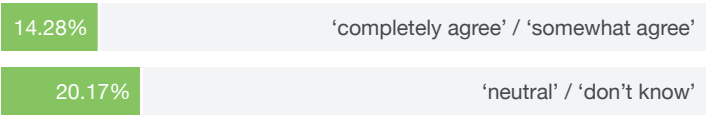
Heterosexual	85.71%
Homosexual	4.95%
Bisexual	4.40%
I don't describe my sexual orientation as any of these	4.95%

Findings

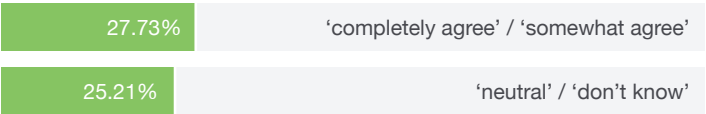
“Women who are caught cheating on their boyfriends/husbands/partners, sometimes claim it was rape because they don’t want to admit the truth.”



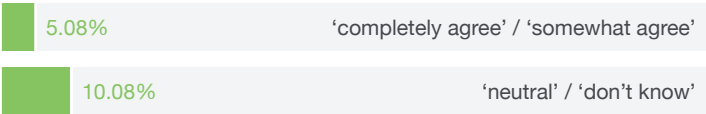
“If both people are drunk, it can’t legally be rape”



“A lot of times, women who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it”



“It shouldn’t be considered rape if a man is drunk and didn’t realize that he was forcing someone to engage in sex acts”



Implications

There clearly remains a need to educate or re-educate young men (and women) about consent, healthy relationships, and the law. Data extracted from the 2013 cycle of the American College Health Association’s National College Health Assessment II reveal that of the 1,380 respondents at Mount Royal University, approximately 10% of male and female students had experienced some form of sexual victimisation within the previous 12 months.

Some may question the need for a specific sexual assault education program based on the number of these reported incidents, but it is important to look at data from a subset of those willing to respond only and that it is not indicative of reality. Sexual assault reporting rates across Canada reveal that only 1 in 10 victims report sexual assault and data from a previous study by Tavcer focused on Edmonton and Calgary mirrors similar reporting/un-reporting rates. The reluctance to report an assault stems from a number of reasons such as fear, shame and victim-blaming, he said/she said beliefs and the fact that re-victimization often occurs through the media and the courts.